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(71) **Applicant (for all designated States except US):** **BRIDGE-  
STONE CORPORATION** [JP/JP]; 10-1, Kyobashi,  
1-Chome, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104 (JP).

(72) **Inventors; and**

(75) **Inventors/Applicants (for US only):** **YAN, Yuan-Yong**  
[CN/US]; 613 Redfield Lane, Copley, Ohio 44321 (US).  
**LAWSON, David** [US/US]; 11621 Garden Lane NW,  
Uniontown, Ohio 44685 (US).

(74) **Agents:** **WOOD, Jonathan** et al.; Bridgestone Ameri-  
cas Holding, Inc., 1200 Firestone Parkway, Akron, Ohio  
44317-0001 (US).

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(54) **Title:** FUNCTIONALIZED POLYMER WITH LINKING GROUP

(57) **Abstract:** A functionalized polymer includes an elastomer, a terminal functional group including at least one heteroatom, and a unit intermediate the elastomer and the functional group; the intermediate unit includes a terminal moiety which, in its anionic form, is less basic than a secondary amino radical ion. Methods of making the functionalized polymer and of using it with particulate filler to make, e.g., a tire tread composition also are disclosed.

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